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TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EIND](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: EGYPT: RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR CHILD LABOR
INFORMATION FOR TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT ACT REPORT

REF: A. 08 SECSTATE 127448
[B](#). 08 CAIRO 1192
[C](#). 08 CAIRO 1643

[1](#). SUMMARY: The Government of Egypt (GOE) continues to make progress towards restricting and regulating child labor. In June 2008, Egypt's Parliament passed a comprehensive set of amendments to the Child Protection Law raising the minimum age for employment from fourteen to fifteen years, and the minimum age for seasonal employment from twelve to thirteen years. The amendments also criminalize trafficking in children. The GOE and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continue working together, including through a World Food Program project financed by the U.S. Department of Labor, on child labor-related issues and enforcement. As requested by reference A, the following information updates developments in child labor in Egypt and the information contained in the 2007 Trade and Development Act Report Egypt chapter. END SUMMARY.

LAWS AND REGULATIONS PROSCRIBING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

[2](#). On June 7, 2008, Egypt's People's Assembly approved a series of amendments to Egypt's Child Protection Law which raised the minimum working age for children and criminalized trafficking in children (ref B). The amendments raised minimum working ages from fourteen to fifteen years for regular employment and from twelve to thirteen years for seasonal employment. (Source: Law 126 of the Year 2008 on Amending Provisions of the Child Law.)

[3](#). The amendments also criminalize trafficking in children and establish penalties for the offense. Specifically, the provision bans any "abuse, trafficking, sexual harassment, and commercial or economic abuse of children." The amendments establish a punishment of at least five years imprisonment and a fine of between LE 50,000 (\$9,260) and LE 200,000 (\$37,000) for anyone who "buys, sells, or offers a child for sale" or anyone who "participates in transferring a child as a slave for sexual or commercial exploitation." The law was developed and approved through the efforts of Egypt's quasi-governmental National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM).

REGULATIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT OF PROSCRIPTIONS AGAINST THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR (Section B)

[4](#). Egypt has ratified ILO conventions 138 regarding the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment and 182 concerning Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor. In furtherance of Egypt's convention obligations, the Ministry of Manpower and Migration (MOMM) has established a list of 44 hazardous occupations and industries where children under age fifteen, and in some cases seventeen, are prohibited from working.

15. The GOE appears committed to enforcing child labor laws, with First Lady Suzanne Mubarak actively involved in the issue through her position as President of the NCCM. The MOMM, working with the NCCM, generally is effective in enforcing child labor regulations in the formal sector, especially in state-owned enterprises. Enforcement in the informal sector is lax, particularly in villages and poorer urban areas where children work to support their families, especially with respect to children working as domestic servants, in the agricultural sector, or under the auspices of family members. There were, however, a number of local press reports during the year of enforcement actions in the informal sector. In most reported cases, children were removed from the work environment and legal action was taken against the employers who were found to be in violation of child labor-prohibiting legislation. Over the past year, the local press reported on number of arrests of individuals coercing street children to beg, steal and work in informal activities.

WHETHER THERE ARE SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO PREVENT AND WITHDRAW CHILDREN FROM THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR (Section C)

16. The United Nations World Food Program, working in conjunction with the NCCM and NGO partners, continues to implement a U.S. Department of Labor financed project with the objective of withdrawing child workers from the labor force and protecting at risk children. The NCCM, has created a 24-hour child labor hot-line, and working with the ILO and NGOs, implemented a number of awareness raising programs including the Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and Media (SCREAM) program and the Red Card Against Child Labor campaign.

DOES EGYPT HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY AIMED AT THE ELIMINATION OF THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR (Section D)

17. The NCCM working with the MOMM, Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), ILO, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Ministries of Social Affairs, Agriculture, Education, Health and Interior developed in 2006 the "First National Strategy for the Progressive Elimination of Child Labor." The NCCM continues to work with its partners to implement the strategy. In June 2008, Suzanne Mubarak chaired a conference organized by the NCCM entitled "A Future Without Child Labor" in furtherance of the implementation of a national strategy. The high-level involvement in child-related issues lends importance and political weight to the enforcement and speed at which policies and projects are implemented.

IS EGYPT MAKING CONTINUAL PROGRESS TOWARD ELIMINATING THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR (Section E)

18. Challenges remain, but the GOE appears to be making some progress toward eliminating the worst forms of child labor, including through the June 2008 passage of the comprehensive amendments to the Child Law. While child labor, driven by poverty and traditional practice remains a problem, NGOs report that public and GOE awareness of the problem and concern for the well-being of impoverished children appears to be on the rise.
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